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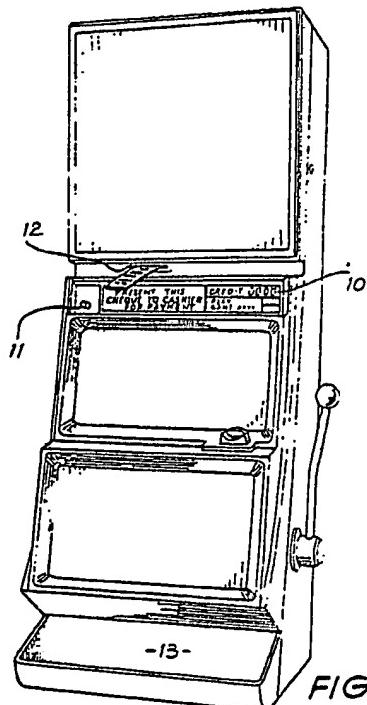
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(54) Gaming machines

(57) A poker machine incorporating a microprocessor programmed to control the operation of the machine in such a manner that where any payout required of the machine is less than a certain value, the payout is paid to a player by coins to a tray 13 and if in excess of that value a printed record of the amount of the payout is issued by the machine from a slot 12 to the player.



F/G.1

At least one drawing originally filed was informal and the print reproduced here is taken from a later filed formal copy.

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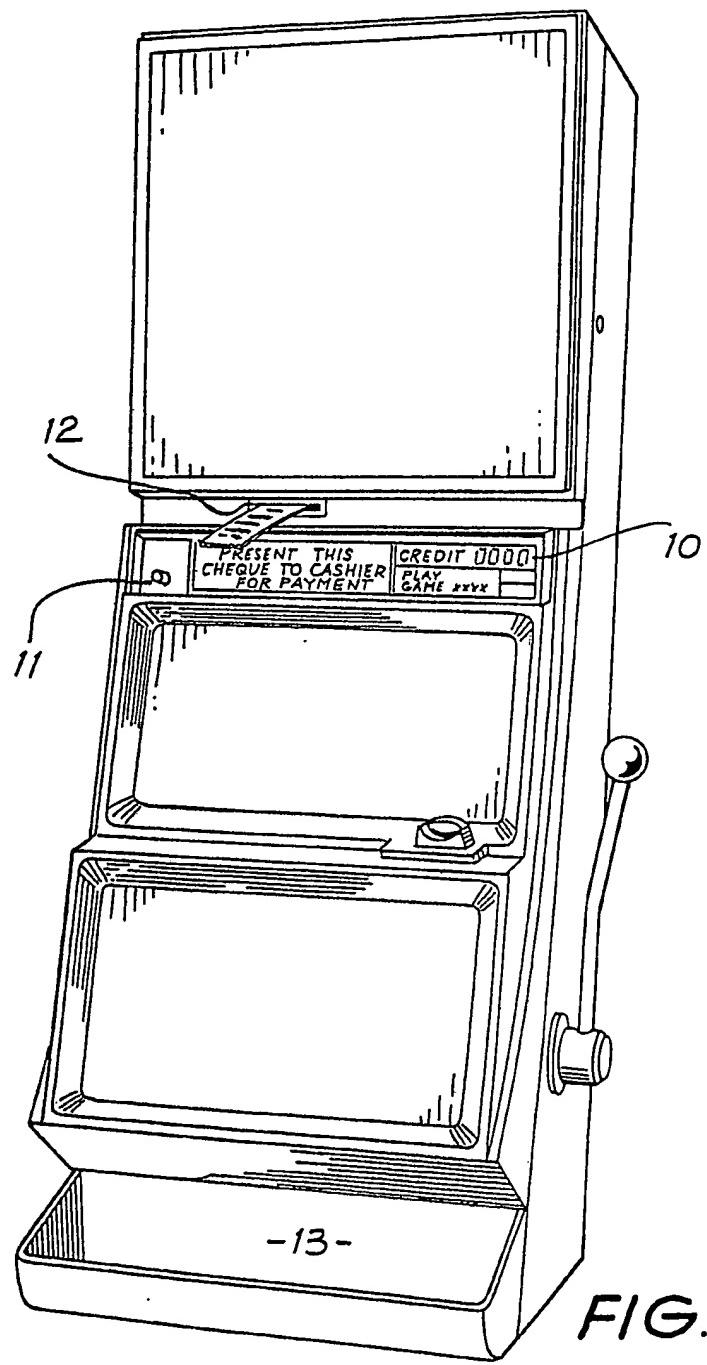


FIG.1

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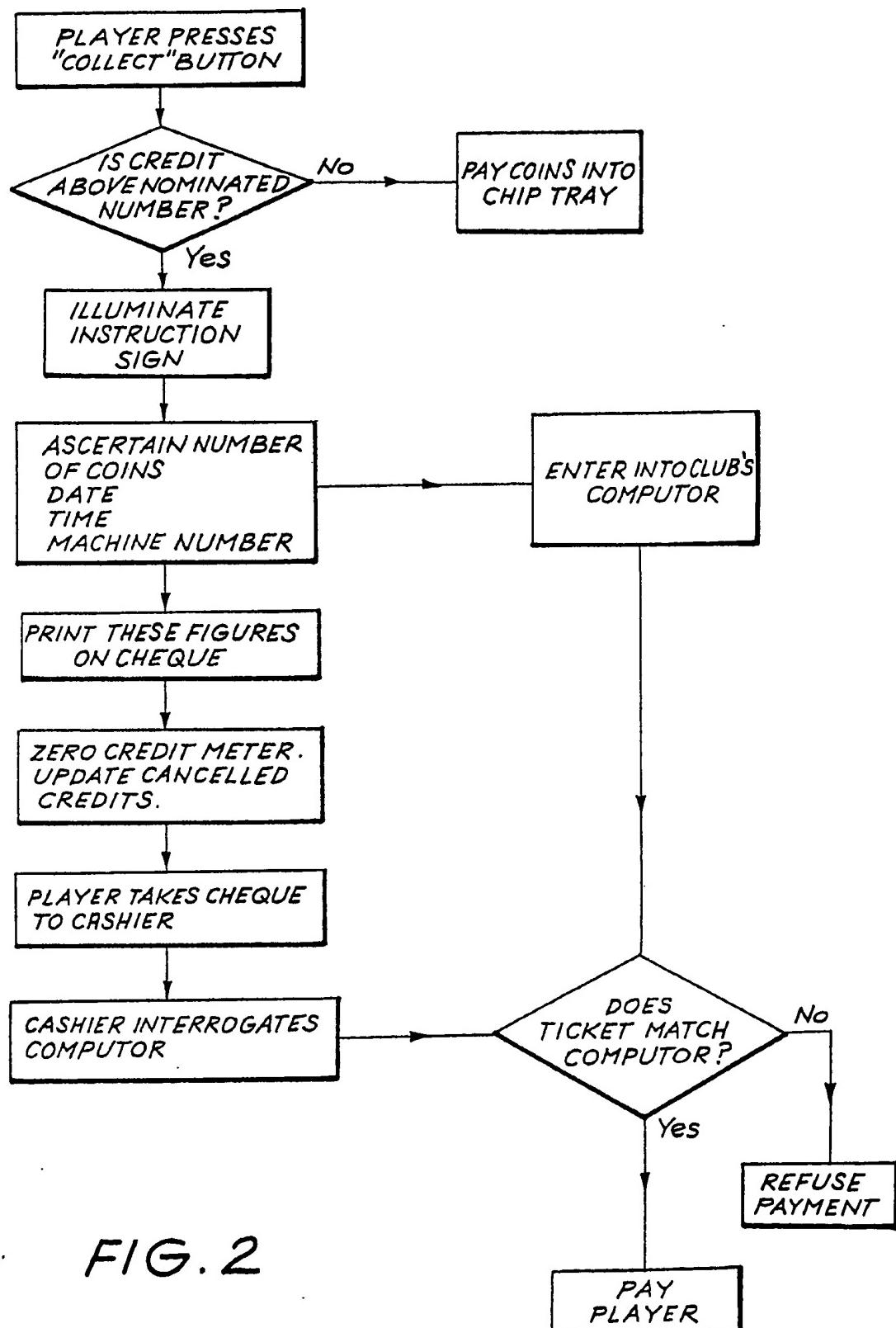


FIG. 2

IMPROVEMENTS IN POKER MACHINES

The present invention relates to poker machines and more particularly to a means for paying out from poker machines a relatively large sum won as a prize by a player.

Poker machine players wishing to leave or change  
5 machines, collect any credit they may have by pressing a "collect" button. If their credit is below a nominated amount (say 300 coins), the machine pays this by coins into a chip tray, decrementing the credit meter of the machine as it does so.

10 Although the hopper or payout device of the machine may hold twice the above nominated amount when completely full, it is frequently not in this condition, and large emptyings would cause the machine to require refills which the player would subsequently often cash into notes at the  
15 cashiers desk - making unnecessary work.

For this reason and even more importantly for security, the larger pays are made by calling a steward to the machine. The steward inspects the machine, notes the credit meter reading and enters this into a book together  
20 with the machine's number for the player's signature and the steward signs also.

Some clubs in which poker machines are installed pay larger amounts won by players by cheque, allowing the club to cancel before payment, if fraud is suspected.

25 With the player paid, the steward turns a "cancel credit" keyswitch on the machine causing the credit meter to zero and the machines "cancelled credit" meter to be incremented by the credit meter's former amount.

The better class of poker machine stores an array of  
30 audit information which includes cancelled credits, and can be made to print out this information (including date and time) upon command. Printing may be on a paper ribbon within the machine, or if the machines are linked by a communication line it is also shown on the club's computer. On such installations most of the hardware

exists for the proposed invention.

The object of the present invention is to provide a means for paying out larger winning amounts, which greatly simplifies the procedure and has the advantages described 5 below.

The present invention consists in a poker machine incorporating microprocessor controlled means for ascertaining whether any payout required of the machine exceeds a certain value, means for delivering coins to a 10 place accessible to a player if the amount of the payout is less than the said certain value and means for issuing to the player a printed record of the amount of the payout together with instructions for the collection thereof if the amount is greater than the said certain value.

15 In order that the nature of the invention may be better understood a preferred embodiment of the invention is hereinafter described, by way of example, with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:-

Fig. 1 is a perspective view of a poker machine 20 incorporating the invention; and

Fig. 2 is a flow chart of operations in a machine incorporating the invention.

The invention is applied to an otherwise conventional poker machine having a credit meter 10 indicating the 25 amount standing to the credit of a player as a result of a win or wins on the machine and a collect button 11 which is pressed by a player who wishes to withdraw the sum standing to his credit on the credit meter 10.

Within the machine is a printer arranged to print 30 onto a roll of paper ribbon, with means to control the operation of the printer so that on an appropriate command the printer prints onto the paper ribbon, matter, details of which are given below and extrudes a length of the paper ribbon on which printing has been carried out, 35 through a slot 12 in the front of the machine. The

printing apparatus and the means controlling the printing apparatus are of a conventional nature and will therefore not be described in the specification.

The whole operation of poker machines is now controlled by a microprocessor and suitable programmes can be incorporated into this to oversee the operation of the printer and the payout of coins.

In use when a player wishes to collect the credit that has accrued to him on the credit meter 10 he presses the button 11. By means of a programme incorporated into the microprocessor controlling the machine, on the "collect" button being pressed the microprocessor acts on the basis of whether or not the value of the sum shown on the credit meter is above or below a predetermined value, for example, the value equivalent to 300 of the coins with which the machine is intended to operate. In the event that the value is below the predetermined value the normal coin payout mechanism in the machine is activated and coin is delivered to the chip tray 13 for collection by the player. If, however, the value exceeds the predetermined amount the printer within the machine is actuated to print the credit meter reading, the date, time and machine number on the paper ribbon. This paper ribbon is preferably already pre-printed with instructions to the effect that it constitutes a cheque payable only by the club's cashier and that it must be cashed within a nominated period. The printed length of ribbon is caused to emerge from the slot 12 where it can be torn off as is the case in ticket issuing machines. An audible and visual display is actuated to draw the player's attention to the issued "cheque". Simultaneously, the machine transmits the necessary information to the club computer.

On presenting the cheque to the cashier for payment the cashier keys in the machine number into the computer and checks that the value and time shown on the ticket

match with those on the terminal. This check is to guard against fraud. The cashier then cashes the cheque giving the player either money or a cheque on the club's bank account.

5 Set out in Figure 2 is a diagram showing the flow chart of operations and the logic followed by the microprocessor in either paying out coins or printing out a "cheque". The programming of a microprocessor to follow this logic is a routine operation.

10 The embodiment of the invention described above is given by way of example as illustrating one application to the invention defined in the succeeding claims.

1. A poker machine incorporating microprocessor controlled means for ascertaining whether any payout required of the machine exceeds a certain value, means for delivering coins to a place accessible to a player if the amount of the payout is less than the said certain value and means for issuing to the player a printed record of the amount of the payout together with instructions for the collection thereof if the amount is greater than the said certain value.
2. A poker machine as claimed in claim 1 wherein the printed record is in the form of a paper ribbon dispensed from a printer within the machine.
3. A poker machine incorporating microprocessor means programmed to implement the logic of the flow chart shown in and described with reference to Fig. 2 of the accompanying drawings.

Amendments to the claims have been filed as follows

CLAIMS

1. A poker machine incorporating a microprocessor controlled means for ascertaining when any payout required of the machine exceeds a certain value, means for delivering coins to a place accessible to a player if the amount of the payout is less than said certain value, a printer within the machine controlled by said microprocessor, a store of paper therein, and means to actuate said printer to print on a portion of said paper a printed record of the amount of the payout together with instructions for the collection thereof if the amount is greater than the said certain value and issue said printed record to the player.

2. A poker machine as claimed in Claim 1, wherein the printed record is in the form of a paper ribbon.

3. A poker machine incorporating microprocessor means programmed to implement the logic of the flow chart shown in and described with reference to Figure 2 of the drawings.